

Bates (Josh.)

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED IN CASTLETON DECEMBER 2, 1823,

AT THE

COMMENCEMENT

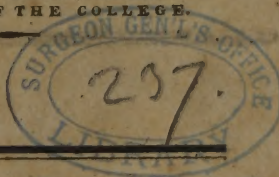
OF THE

VERMONT ACADEMY OF MEDICINE,

CONNECTED WITH

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE.


By Joshua Bates, D.D.
PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE.



SMITH & SHUTE, PRINTERS.

1824.

ADDRESS.



The transactions of this day, in many important respects, furnish occasion for congratulatory address. We may congratulate our country, in view of the increasing attention paid to medical science, and of the consequent improvement in the practice of the healing art—of the rising respectability of a profession, so extensive in its influence, and so intimately connected with human happiness, as that of physick. We may congratulate the guardians and patrons of this institution on the success which has attended their efforts to place it on a respectable and permanent foundation, and render it subservient to the cause of humanity. We may congratulate the professors, that their arduous duties have not been discharged in vain, nor their labours performed without the best of rewards, the satisfaction of publick usefulness. We may congratulate the young gentlemen, who have enjoyed the distinguished privileges, here furnished, for improvement in medical science. Especially may we congratulate those, who have completed the prescribed course of preparatory studies, that they are

about to enter on the publick and responsible duties of their profession, with the best evidence of their qualifications, the most honourable testimonials of character, and the fairest prospects of respectability and usefulness in life.

The profession of physick does, indeed, occupy a distinguished and honourable place among the employments to which men are called by the voice of benevolence. Its comparative importance may be estimated by a view of its subserviency to human happiness. Without health, all other terrestrial sources of enjoyment would fail to answer the purpose for which they were opened—to produce their intended effects. What can soften the sick man's couch? Can riches, or honours, or amusements, or even the soothing voice of friendship? Wealth may, indeed, crown our table with delicious fare; but health alone can give a relish to the richest viands. It may procure for us the downy pillow, or adorn us with costly robes and splendid apparel; but it cannot remove the pain of an aching head, nor quench the flames of a burning fever, nor chase away the rigours of a convulsive ague. It may, indeed, purchase all the means of luxury; but it cannot, for a moment, resist the baleful influence of disease; nor cause the sick man to forget his languishment, and cease to feel his pain. Riches, without health, are like the fabled cup of Tantalus; they excite, without gratifying our natural desire of happiness; instead of alleviating, they often increase our sufferings, and mock us in our misery. The same might be said of all other sources of earthly enjoyment. They must all fail to yield the refreshing stream, except it be conveyed

through the channel, which health opens to the seat of happiness in man.

Whatever, therefore, is calculated to preserve or restore health, assumes an importance not to be measured by any other earthly good. Hence the direct bearing and immense influence, which the profession of physick has on the happiness of mankind. For in vain would be the remedies and preventives of disease, which are so profusely scattered around us, without knowledge to discern their adaptation to their proper ends, and skill to make a ready application. And (let it never again be forgotten ; it has been too often forgotten,) this knowledge can be acquired by careful study and laborious research alone ; and this skill by nothing short of an acquaintance with the accumulated results of practical experience. It is true, some have boasted of medical skill, without knowledge, or of knowledge obtained without study and the labour of research ; they have pretended to the discovery of a more direct avenue to the temple of Æsculapius, than that which encircles the extended field of science ; but they have never found access to his sacred altars ; their worship has been hypocrisy—their offering “strange fire ;” or, to speak without a figure, no safe specifick, no sovereign panacea has yet been discovered ; nor any man *born* a physician.

The history of the healing art incontestibly proves, that, in order to secure its highest benefits, it must be made a distinct profession ; and this profession be accessible to those only, who have devoted much time, and employed respectable talents in appropriate preparatory studies. Indeed, the science of medicine opens a field of research, re-

quiring all the energies of a vigorous mind ; and calling to its aid all the patience, necessary to an acquaintance with the accumulated experience of ages. It puts in requisition every intellectual faculty ; and lays under contribution every branch of natural science. To trace the symptoms, discern the character, and mark the progress of disease, requires in the physician a knowledge of anatomy and pathology, or an intimate acquaintance with the structure of the human frame, and the various functions of its several organs. Nor can this knowledge be accurately acquired without some acquaintance with the various branches of natural philosophy, including the laws of chemical affinity. To discover and apply appropriate remedies, the physician must explore the vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms; must study the sciences of botany, zoology, and mineralogy—must by chemical analysis investigate the properties of medicine, and be able to predict its operations, and anticipate its effects.

Thus almost every point, in the whole circle of the sciences, has a direct bearing on the profession of physick. I would not be understood to intimate, however, that all branches of science are equally important ; much less, that all are indispensable to the successful practice of medicine. Sound judgment, with careful and patient observation, may sometimes go far to supply the deficiency of education and scientific preparation. Nor will science alone, however broad the foundation, and however elevated the superstructure, supersede the necessity of moral qualifications. To a good physician, patience, industry, temperance, unshaken fortitude, and incorruptible fidelity, are indispensable requisites.

It is obvious too, that these scientifick qualifications cannot be obtained by all, with equal facility ; nor possessed by all, in equal degrees. More especially is it obvious, that they cannot have been equally within the reach of men, in every age, and every clime. The sciences are all progressive. Not one of them has attained to its highest elevation in a single age—not one of them has yet reached a state of perfection. Medicine, with its kindred sciences and arts, has had its infancy, its childhood, and its youthful vigour ; it has “grown with their growth, and increased with their strength ;” but, like them, it has not yet reached the maturity of manhood ; much less has it assumed that gigantick form, to which it is surely destined, and to which it is now rapidly rising.

No sooner were diseases introduced, with sin, into the world, than remedies were eagerly sought. But, for a long time, the discovery of them must have been exceedingly limited, and the art of applying them exceedingly imperfect. The tardy steps of every collateral and subsidiary branch of science must, of necessity, have checked the progress of medical knowledge. Beside, the advancement of this science, more than any other, has been retarded by the blindness of bigotry, the terrours of superstition, and the unsupported hypotheses of speculative philosophy. Vain were all attempts to obtain anatomical knowledge, while superstition prohibited the dissection of the human body. The analogical conclusions of comparative anatomy were often false—always inconclusive. Nor was it, till philosophy had shaken off the trammels of the schools, discarded the authority of dogma and hypothesis, and as-

sumed the order of nature, proceeding by analysis, collecting facts, and rising by induction from particular observations to general principles, that this, with other branches of science, began to exhibit a permanent character, and advance by regular steps of improvement. Hippocrates, indeed, may have accomplished something, by an entire separation of physick from philosophy, while philosophy consisted of nothing but presumptuous dogmas and wild conjectures; but the separation was unnatural; and his improvements were of course limited in progress, and temporary in duration. His system, to give it consistency and durability, needed the support of true philosophy and collateral science. After a lapse of ages, Galen, by his superiour genius and industry, was able to revive, in a measure, the proper spirit of inquiry and improvement; but neither his genius nor his industry could overcome the obstacles which lay in his path; and all improvement in medical science slept with him, for thirteen hundred years, buried in the rubbish of the cloister and the darkness of the monastery. But when Luther had broken the chains of superstition, and Bacon, aided by Descartes and Locke, had overthrown the pillars of scholastick philosophy—when free inquiry was permitted, and the laws of inductive reasoning established, this, with the other sciences, was placed on a foundation, never to be shaken; and acquired a progressive improvement, never to become retrograde. From the time of Sydenham this progress has generally been uniform; increasing with increasing rapidity, like the velocity of a gravitating body, in its uninterrupted approach to the centre of gravity. While anatomy, with its practi-

cal application to surgery, has annually received a tribute from the classified observations of the physiologist ; materia medica has been no less improved by philosophical research into nature ; and especially, by the discoveries of chemical analysis. Indeed nothing seems to have contributed more directly and more effectually to the advancement of medical science, than the progress of what Mr. Locke has quaintly denominated "philosophy by fire."

But the recent establishment and multiplication of medical schools is perhaps, more than every thing beside, calculated to give a diffusive circulation to this accumulated and accumulating knowledge of disease and remedy ; and thus to raise the standard and elevate the character of the medical profession. By private instruction, patient research, and careful observation, many, indeed, have obtained a fund of practical knowledge, and become useful and even eminent physicians. But how often has genius exhausted its energies in experiments, which had been already made ! How much time has been expended in researches, the results of which had been already discovered ! How many have thus spent a long life in the investigation of what was already known, and what might have been demonstrated to them in a single lecture !—An institution like the "Vermont Academy of Medicine," is therefore of immense importance to the progress of medical knowledge. It is happily calculated, as in a focus, to collect the scattered rays of medical science ; and again, as from a radiant point, reflect them back on society, with all their enlightening and vivifying influence. Beside the facility which such schools afford for the acquisition of knowledge, and the ra-

pidity with which they enable a young man of talents to qualify himself for respectability in his profession ; they have a direct tendency to prevent medical imposture—to detect and discourage ignorant pretenders to innate skill—to give a death-blow to empiricism, with all its effrontery and nostrums. Well, then, may we rejoice in the establishment of these schools in our country ! Well may we hail this day, as a happy era in the history of the *Æsculapian* art ! Well may we congratulate the publick, on the rise and progress of this infant institution !

The trustees and guardians of the institution surely have reason for self-gratulation, that, amidst the difficulties and discouragements, incident to an undertaking so vast and complicated, they have been enabled to persevere ; and so soon raise it to an elevated rank, and give to it a character of permanence and respectability.—Gentlemen, let not your devotion to its interest, nor your zeal for its prosperity, abate. The same fostering hand which has raised it, must be stretched out for its support. As in point of time, it was the first institution of the kind in the state ; so let it be the first in point of character and publick usefulness.—Nor will the professors, on whose fidelity and indefatigable labour its high reputation chiefly depends, fail of obtaining that reward, which arises from a consciousness of having accomplished an object, at once important to the cause of medical science, and honourable and beneficial to their country.

The young gentlemen, who have enjoyed the distinguished advantages which the institution affords, will not, we trust, tarnish its character, nor neglect its interests. To

those especially, who have now completed their preparatory studies, and are about publickly to receive the honourable testimonials of their attainments in medical science, under the seal of the college, with which this academy is connected ; and to enter on the important, laborious, and responsible duties of their profession, we would address a word of congratulation and exhortation.—We congratulate you, gentlemen, on your prospects of success and usefulness in your profession. It is a profession highly honourable, because highly useful ; and you are about to enter it, under peculiarly favourable auspices. In your preparatory studies, you have enjoyed advantages for improvement, which fall to the lot of few ; and you will carry with you credentials, which will every where command respect, and ensure to you a cordial reception. It is true, this institution and the classical seminary, with which it is connected, have their enemies. But they are such enemies, as a dignified and energetic institution must always expect ;—enemies to enlarged benevolence, elevated science, and sanctifying truth ;—enemies upon the narrow principles of selfishness, and the low intrigue of a wretched and short-sighted policy ;—enemies to the best interests of the state, and the true happiness and glory of the community. They cannot invalidate your credentials, nor tarnish your reputation. We, therefore, congratulate you on the bright prospects which open to your view, at your entrance upon your profession ; and we exhort you to a faithful discharge of its high and responsible duties.—It is a thought full of solemnity to a serious and benevolent mind, that the health and lives of your fellow-men are to be committed, in a measure, to your care ; and

that, in the same measure, their blood will be required at your hands. Indeed, motives of interest, of benevolence, of accountableness conspire to urge you to a faithful improvement of your talents, and to a faithful and watchful application of your professional knowledge. Nor should it be forgotten, that your standing in society and daily intercourse with all classes of men, will give you an extensive influence on the moral, political, and religious character of community. May this influence be always salutary; and may you be rendered eminently useful and happy, in alleviating the miseries and promoting the happiness of your fellow-men.—Finally, may we all, in whatever sphere we are destined to move—in whatever employment we are called to engage, act well our part; and receive at last the approbation of our Judge.—May we all find a remedy for that disease with which our souls are deeply infected, in the balm of Gilead, applied by the skilful hand of the great Physician.



Appendix,

CONTAINING AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE MEDICAL
SCHOOL IN CASTLETON; BY ONE FULLY ACQUAINTED
WITH ITS ORIGIN AND PROGRESS.



The **Vermont Academy of Medicine** owes its origin to the liberality, energy and patronage of Doctors SELAH GRIDLEY and THEODORE WOODWARD of Castleton;—the one eminent in the science and practice of Physick; the other in Physick and Surgery.

These gentlemen purchased a building in the central part of the pleasant village of Castleton, which was built for a store and office; and unitedly opened a medical school in the spring of the year 1818.

In Oct. 1818, they obtained from the Legislature of Vermont, a defective act of incorporation, by the name of Castleton Medical Academy (which was altered to its present name at the Oct. session in 1822,) and increased the number of the Board to ten members. Additional instructors in Anatomy, Physiology, Chemistry and Botany, were employed in those important branches of medical education.

The school, thus incorporated and organized, attracted public notice; and the rapid increase of the number of students, and professional men who resorted to it for instruction and improvement, gave celebrity to the institution.

To excite emulation among the students, the corporation, in August 1819, united with that of Middlebury College, where their final examination was made and degrees of Doctor of Medicine adjudged and conferred on the meritorious.

In October 1820, the charter of incorporation was enlarged by giving to the institution the right and power of conferring degrees : yet the connection with Middlebury College still continues, and degrees conferred, as before the enlarging act.

It was soon found that the building, thus purchased and fitted up, was not sufficient to accommodate the increasing number of medical students. It was thereupon resolved, by the corporation in the winter of 1821, to purchase a suitable site, whereon to remove the old building, and erect an additional one of about fifty feet by thirty ; two stories high ; with a sky-light, and a turret for a bell. A place was accordingly purchased, the building removed, and an additional one erected in the summer of 1821. The first floor contains a spacious lecture room with ascending seats, a chemical laboratory and apparatus, and a study and library room. In the second story is the anatomical theatre and lecture room, directly under the sky-light, with ascending circular seats, which are entered by two avenues ; the one horizontally, the other by descending stairs towards the centre. It also contains a dissecting room, and another room which is occupied for a valuable anatomical museum, various minerals and natural curiosities. These buildings have been erected and furnished with a bell and apparatus by the industry, liberality, responsibility and exertions of a number of individuals in Castleton and its vicinity. It is the first medical institution established in this state ; and deserves the liberal aid and patronage of the great and good. While our lives and healths are considered as important to community and precious to ourselves, such an institution must be of immense value to render more useful the medical profession, which has been for years past, so much disgraced by ignorance, deception and quackery. Such institutions excite diligent inquiry and investigation in the science of medicine ; and concentrate their results. They also collect into one common fund the knowledge and experience of the profession ; where it is scrutinized with caution and approved or disapproved by the united counsel of skilful and experienced men ; and then diffused and applied to practice in community. This serves as a bulwark against the fatal effects of accident and the attacks of disease.

The necessary expences of the institution became burthen-some upon its friends and patrons, and upon the liberal part of community : the corporation, therefore, petitioned the Legislature, in Oct. 1821 for pecuniary aid to defray, in part, the expences of the building-, and to procure an addition to the library and apparatus. This, like other petitions for similar purposes, proved unsuccessful. The Legislature readily incorporate li-

terary and other institutions, but never feed or cloathe them from the treasury. While similar institutions receive liberal aid and support from the treasury of our sister states, ours must rely, for their existence, upon their industry, usefulness and a justly acquired and extended reputation; and upon individual patronage and liberality. In the mean time, the pecuniary embarrassments were not the only difficulties, which the institution had to encounter. Some of its professors forgot the original stock into which they were ingrafted. They loved its *nourishment* more than its growth or welfare. And they also loved a controuling exercise of power over it more than the government of correct and just principles. Envy, ambition and avarice sometimes enter the breasts of *great* as well as *small* men. Whenever vain ambition is the ruling passion of the soul of man, it increases, like avarice, by repeated gratification. The patient will soon discover symptoms of instability, and become inflated with ostentation and the love of power. Add to this *the love of money*, and then *future prospects and influence* only serve to provoke *appetite* and stimulate *desire* even to frenzy. Thus men often lose sight of patriotism and the love of extending useful knowledge; and thereby shipwreck *their fortunes* and reputations; and also do essential injury to others and to the publick.

All the professorships have been filled by able and scientifick men; whose interests and feelings are identified with the prosperity and usefulness of the institution.

Lectures on Chemistry and Botany are open to all who wish to attend only on them; and also on Anatomy.

The regular course of lectures will commence on the first Tuesday of September annually. Five lectures or more will be delivered every day, under five professorships.

1. Anatomy and Physiology, to commence daily at eleven o'clock A. M.

2. Theory and Practice of Medicine and Medical Jurisprudence daily, after the first five weeks, to commence at nine o'clock A. M. and three P. M.

3. Principles and Practice of Surgery and Obstetricks, with the diseases of women and children, daily, to commence at ten o'clock A. M.; and also after the first eight weeks of the term at two P. M.

4. Chemistry, Botany and Natural Philosophy daily, to commence at nine o'clock A. M. and at two P. M. and occasionally in the evening at seven for the first eight weeks of the term.

5. Materia Medica and Pharmacy daily, the first five weeks of the term, to commence at ten o'clock A. M. and two P. M.

The annual commencement will be holden at Castleton on Wednesday at the close of each term, when the students, entitled to degrees, will have them conferred; or at the annual commencement, at Middlebury, on the third Wednesday of August.

Notwithstanding the numerous embarrassments under which the institution has laboured, yet the rapid increase of the number of students is conclusive evidence of its extensive usefulness and prosperity.

In 1818, when the lectures first commenced, fifteen students only attended the spring, and nine the fall term. In 1819, twenty-four; in 1820, forty-four; in 1821, seventy-six; in 1822, eighty-six; and in 1823, one hundred and twenty-six.

On the first Tuesday of December 1823, the first annual commencement was holden at Castleton, when the degree of Doctor of Medicine was conferred on thirty-one graduates; and some were deferred until the annual commencement of Middlebury College.

A numerous audience attended, and an address was delivered by Doctor Bates, President of Middlebury College; and also by Professor Anderson, member of the Royal College in Edinburgh, Europe: and a salutatory oration in Latin, and a valedictory oration in English, by two of the graduates.

The rapid progress of this medical institution, under its various embarrassments, is without a parallel; and reflects honour on its founders, professors and patrons. It was founded in benevolence; and has been supported by a zeal to promote the publick good and to render more useful to community the medical profession.

Within the short period of five years, it has been enabled to assume a primary rank with other institutions liberally endowed from the publick treasury;—and it now offers to the medical students of the United States as great theoretick and practical advantages in the study, practice and science of medicine as can be found in any other seminary; and with less expense.

The corporation and professors of the institution humbly solicit publick and private patronage and liberality; and pledge themselves not only to receive their bounties with gratitude and faithfully to apply them to the publick good, and the improvement of the institution; but also so to conduct its publick and private concerns as to reward its benefactors, and deserve well of their country.